

Benefits to Mentees

The Signs of Success

Mentors frequently ask: Am I making a difference? What are the signs of progress that can be considered successful in a mentor/mentee relationship? For some, it may be ten years before a “former” mentee looks back, in retrospect, and says - ‘you know who made a difference in my life? My mentor... when I was in second grade’.

Below are the signs of success which mentors observe from mentees as a result of the relationship. Teachers notice the same improvement. Remember the key - PATIENCE...Every relationship is different.

- Improved attendance
- Improved eye contact
- Raising a hand more often in class
- Increased communication
- Taking more risks in class and with friends
- Smiling
- Improved interactions with peers
- Happier at school
- Improved appearance
- Increased consideration of others
- Decreased hostility
- More enthusiastic
- Fewer trips to the principal’s office
- Reduced detentions
- Improved attitude
- Improved academic performance
- Paying more attention
- Opening up to the mentor

Benefits to Mentors

Mentors make a difference in the life of at-risk youth. There are personal benefits which mentors have shared. These are welcomed outgrowths of the one-to-one relationship established.

Mentors

- Appear happier when they return to the work place
- Are fulfilled with their commitment as a volunteer in the community
- Have a greater understanding of the educational system in which they are working and education-related issues.
- Have better about themselves for having impacted another’s life

Get along better with their own families (spouse and children)
Often become a better prepared workforce

EFFECTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

What is an effective mentoring in relationship? In a recent study of four Linking Lifetimes programs, Public/Private Ventures attempted to define effective adult/youth relationships and determine if such relationships do in fact develop in an intergenerational setting.

Based on this study, the following are recommended strategies for interacting with your youth.

Understand the youth's reluctance to trust.

Many of the young people in this program have been disappointed by previous relationships with adults. Be patient. It may take a while for your youth to overcome his/her hesitance and begin to trust you.

View your purpose in the program as being available to give, understanding that, at least initially, the relationship will be one-directional.

Offer reassurance and support.

It's important to offer reassurance and kindness to your youth and remind him/her that your/re available to talk at any time. Don't be afraid to tell your youth that you care about and believe in him/her. Too many young people rarely hear those words.

Suggest ways to solve problems.

How you respond to a problem presented by your youth will influence the development of your relationship. Try to listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgement. Practical suggestions rather than criticism or preaching, are usually most helpful for your youth. Whenever possible, try to think together of ways to solve a problem, rather than lecture your youth about what you think she/he should do.

Identify the youth's interests and take them seriously.

Try to include your youth in determining both the activities you engage in and the areas in which you offer help.